

INDIA WATCH

No. 63

April 2015

POLITICAL ISSUES

IRAQ

1. India to import oil from Iraq to fill strategic reserves: Source

New Delhi, Wednesday, 18 March 2015

Taking advantage of cheap prices, India is set to import eight million barrels of Iraqi oil to fill its first Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR).

Source: The Economic Times, New Delhi

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-to-import-oil-from-iraq-to-fill-strategic-reserves-source/articleshow/46611794.cms>

ISRAEL

2. It's now ok to speak of India-Israel defence ties...We're not shy, ashamed: Daniel Carmon

New Delhi, Sunday, 15 March 2015

Israeli Ambassador to India Daniel Carmon spoke about improving India-Israel defence ties in an interview and reflected, "We are not shy or ashamed of it." He also underlined the 'threat' posed by Iran, including to New Delhi.

Source: The Indian Express, Mumbai

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/its-now-ok-to-speak-of-india-israel-defence-ties-were-not-shy-ashamed/>

See also: The Financial Express, New Delhi

<http://www.financialexpress.com/article/economy/its-now-ok-to-speak-of-india-israel-defence-ties-were-not-shy-ashamed/53802/>

QATAR

3. Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim to visit India with hopes of new deal for LNG exports

New Delhi, Tuesday, 24 March 2015

As Qatari RasGas and India's Petronet together have entered their 25 years of 7.5 million tons per year sale, the Qatari Emir hoped for a new deal for LNG exports in India.

Source: The Economic Times, New Delhi

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/qatars-emir-sheikh-tamim-bin-hamad-al-thani-to-visit-india-with-hopes-of-new-deal-for-lng-exports/articleshow/46678136.cms>

4. India, Qatar ink six pacts to boost trade and investment

New Delhi, Wednesday, 25 March 2015

India and Qatar signed six agreements as the two countries sought to inject a fresh momentum in their bilateral ties.

Source: The Economic Times, New Delhi

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-qatar-ink-six-pacts-to-boost-trade-and-investment/articleshow/46688998.cms>

5. Qatar has big investment plans for India: Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani

Doha, Wednesday, 25 March 2015

In his first-ever interview to any publication in the world, the Emir of Qatar, said that his energy-rich country wanted to invest big in India.

Source: The Economic Times, New Delhi

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/qatar-has-big-investment-plans-for-india-sheikh-tamim-bin-hamad-al-thani/articleshow/46685103.cms>

6. Emir of Qatar calls on the President

New Delhi, Thursday, 26 March 2015

President Pranab Mukherjee received Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim in New Delhi.

Source: Business Standard, New Delhi

http://www.business-standard.com/article/government-press-release/emir-of-qatar-calls-on-the-president-115032600644_1.html

7. 'Opportune time' to invest in India, President Mukherjee tells Qatar Emir

New Delhi, Thursday, 26 March 2015

As India moves to the "path of high growth", President Pranab Mukherjee sought more investment from Qatar in key areas of defence, insurance and railways, saying it was an "opportune time" for doing so.

Source: DNA, Mumbai

<http://www.dnaindia.com/money/report-opportune-time-to-invest-in-india-president-mukherjee-tells-qatar-emir-2072135>

8. India, Qatar sign prisoner exchange deal

New Delhi, Thursday, 26 March 2015

India and Qatar signed an agreement on transfer of sentenced persons, allowing Indian convicts in Qatar to complete their remaining sentence in India and vice versa.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-qatar-sign-prisoner-exchange-deal/article7032991.ece>

9. India seeks Qatar's help in rescuing hostages

New Delhi, Thursday, 26 March 2015

India sought for Qatar's help in rescuing 39 Indians held hostage by Islamic State (ISIS) as the two countries discussed enhanced cooperation in key areas of defence, security, and trade.

Source: The Indian Express, Mumbai

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/india-seeks-qatars-help-in-rescuing-hostages/>

10. Emir wraps up India visit with praise for Qatar's foreign workers

Doha, Friday, 27 March 2015

Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad paid tribute to the thousands of Indian expatriates living in Qatar as he wrapped up his state visit in New Delhi.

Source: Doha News, Doha

<http://dohanews.co/emir-wraps-up-indian-visit-with-praise-for-qatars-foreign-workers/>

TURKEY

11. Sushma meets Turkish counterpart, talks about 39 Indian hostages in Iraq

New Delhi, Thursday, 19 March 2015

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj held comprehensive talks with her Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu about the 39 Indian hostages in war-torn Iraq and the increasing threat of Islamic militant outfit ISIS in the region.

Source: The Indian Express, Mumbai

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/sushma-meets-turkish-counterpart-talks-about-39-indian-hostages-in-iraq/>

YEMEN

12. Government considering airlifting of Indians stranded in Yemen

Thiruvananthapuram, Saturday, 28 March 2015

The Union government is considering possible airlifting stranded Indians including Keralites from strife-torn Yemen, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj informed Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy.

Source: The Indian Express, Mumbai

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/government-considering-airlifting-of-indians-from-hostile-yemen/>

See also: The Indian Express, Mumbai

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/india-to-send-ships-to-evacuate-people-stranded-in-yemen/>

13. India and the civil war in Yemen

New Delhi, Saturday, 28 March 2015

India is scrambling to evacuate its citizens from the war zone in Yemen as war between the Iran-backed Houthi rebels and the Saudi-supported government has escalated in the last few days.

Source: The Indian Express, Mumbai

<http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/india-and-the-civil-war-in-yemen/>

14. Air India sends its flight, to bring home stranded Indians from a strife-torn Yemen

New Delhi, Monday, 30 March 2015

Air India flew its first flight to airlift hundreds of Indians stranded in the strife-torn Yemen.

Source: The Indian Express, Mumbai

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/air-india-sends-its-flight-to-bring-home-stranded-indians-from-a-strife-torn-yemen/>

15. Yemen battle: India sends ships to evacuate expats, PM seeks Saudi help

Thiruvananthapuram/New Delhi, Tuesday, 31 March 2015

Prime Minister Narendra Modi requested Saudi King Salman to help India to evacuate its nationals from Yemen as New Delhi decided to take sea route to rescue around 400 expatriates stranded in Aden.

Source: The Indian Express, Mumbai

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/ships-leave-for-yemen-to-ferry-stranded-indians/>

16. India Intensifies Pull-Out of Nationals from Yemen; Naval Ship Reaches Aden

New Delhi, Tuesday, 31 March 2015

India intensified efforts to evacuate its around 4,000 nationals from Yemen, deploying aircrafts and five ships as the Saudi-led airstrikes against the Shia Houthi rebels entered the sixth day.

Source: The New Indian Express, Chennai

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/ships-leave-for-yemen-to-ferry-stranded-indians/>

ECONOMIC ISSUES

EGYPT

17. India to Take Part in Egypt Economic Conference

Cairo, Monday, 9 March 2015

A business delegation from India participated in Egypt's economic conference to explore opportunities.

Source: The New Indian Express, Chennai

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/business/news/Indian-to-Take-Part-in-Egypt-Economic-Conference/2015/03/09/article2705659.ece>

IRAN

18. Iran, India to form joint group to facilitate bilateral trade

Tehran, Sunday, 1 March 2015

To boost export of Indian products to Iran, a joint working group of experts will be formed to facilitate bilateral trade.

Source: The Economic Times, New Delhi

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/iran-india-to-form-joint-group-to-facilitate-bilateral-trade/articleshow/46420488.cms>

QATAR

19. Logistics firm launches Qatar-India direct service

Dubai, Monday, 23 March 2015

A Qatar-based logistics firm has launched the first-ever direct container service between Qatar and India to further facilitate bilateral trade.

Source: The Hindu Businessline, Chennai

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/logistics/logistics-firm-launches-qatarindia-direct-service/article7023935.ece>

20. India looking at lowering LNG imports from Qatar

New Delhi, Sunday, 29 March 2015

India is weighing the option of cutting natural gas import volumes by about 10 per cent from Qatar under its long-term contract.

Source: The Hindu Businessline, Chennai

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/india-looking-at-lowering-lng-imports-from-qatar/article7045775.ece>

TURKEY

22. Turkey holds golden delights for India

New Delhi, Tuesday, 17 March 2015

Turkey's policymakers designed an innovative policy, the reserve option mechanism (ROM), which allows commercial banks to maintain part of their statutory reserves requirement in gold or foreign currency. It will enable India to put in place the required infrastructure such as refineries, assaying centres and safe storage which could be utilized for other gold monetization schemes.

Source: The Hindu Businessline, Chennai

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/turkey-holds-golden-delights-for-india/article7003942.ece>

23. Middle East fashion retail major Splash to add 35 stores in India over 4 years

Chennai, Saturday, 28 March 2015

One of the largest fashion retailers of the Middle East called as Splash, is planning to set up around 35 stores in India in the next three to four years.

Source: Business Standard, New Delhi

http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/middle-east-fashion-retail-major-splash-to-add-35-stores-in-india-over-4-years-115032800578_1.html

CULTURAL ISSUES

EGYPT

24. Hindi Flicks Brought India, Egypt Closer: Amitabh

Cairo, Tuesday, 31 March 2015

Bollywood mega star Amitabh Bachchan said Hindi movies have, over the years, brought the historic cultures of India and Egypt closer.

Source: The New Indian Express, Chennai

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/entertainment/hindi/Hindi-Flicks-Brought-India-Egypt-Closer-Amitabh/2015/03/31/article2739819.ece>

MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES

25. India votes against gay rights for UN employees

New Delhi, Thursday, 26 March 2015

India supported a Russian-drafted resolution that opposed benefits for same-sex partners of UN staff, but the resolution failed to pass in the General Assembly committee. India, joined Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE and voted in favour of the draft resolution.

Source: The Indian Express, Mumbai

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/india-votes-against-gay-rights-for-un-employees/>

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